

## I. Introduction (Understanding the Big Picture)

- Since Adam and Eve's sin, there has been separation between God and His people because God is holy and we are not. There is a righteousness problem before God.
- Righteousness is found through faith in Christ. Because our faith is in Christ, we are clothed in His righteousness.
- So Christ not only paid our debt and received God's wrath due to us because of sin but He also gave us His righteousness. Therefore we are now sons and daughters of the Creator of the Universe.
- We can also come before God freely in prayer. There is no longer a divide separating us from Him.
- These are some of the benefits we received being united to Christ through faith in Christ.

## II. Lesson (What's this all about?)

### • Read Philippians 3:1-11

- **Question:** What do you put your confidence in for salvation? What makes you feel like you are ok before God?
  - Doing good? What you know? Church attendance?
  - Christ?
    - There is nothing except faith in Christ for our salvation. He is only one who can make us feel like we are ok before God because he alone is pure and righteous.
    - Unmerited Grace is a glorious head scratcher. That is a true statement. Why?
- Look at the **first two verses**
  - **Question:** Who is Paul calling dogs?
    - Paul is calling the Judaizers dogs. Judaizers are the one's pressuring/persecuting Gentile Christians to conform to the ways of the Jewish community in order to be considered a child of God. That is you accepted by rituals that are apart from/ addition to Christ.
  - **Question:** Why is he calling them dogs?
    - Irony, this was exactly what Judaizers called Gentile Christians who would not conform to such things as purity laws.
    - This was an insult.
      - Dogs were not lovable, huggable companions. They were seen as the most despicable because "they would eat dead animals, their own vomit," and the alike.
    - Paul was saying the actual dogs were the Judaizers because they found their purity solely in their outward, Jewish rituals and Jewish identity. Since they despised true purity in Christ, they were actually the dogs.
    - They misplaced their faith in something other than Christ.
      - They found the security of the outward sign of circumcision to be their entrance into the family of God
  - **Question:** What do you place your sense of security in for salvation? How do you know you are a child of God? What makes a person a child of God?
    - If the student says anything besides Christ he or she is wrong because we are received solely based on the work of Christ.
  - **Verses 4-6:** Flips it on its head: Paul said I was one of them. I am not saying these things as an outsider.
    - Actually, He was greater than most of them. He was high up on the social status ladder in the Jewish community. He gained a lot according to his identity and good deeds.
  - **Verse 7: BUUUUUT! (I love the the big buts of the Bible)**
    - **Question:** Why were those things garbage for Paul?
      - Those things were garbage because he gained Christ.

- Notice, the things listed were not bad, sinful acts of the flesh that he needed to reject. He was rejecting good things in order to gain Christ. **Read verses 4-6 again.**
- Gaining Christ was everything for Paul. His world, thoughts, and actions revolved around Christ.
  - We see that because he literally lost everything because he sat aside his status in the Jewish community in order to be united to Christ/to be found in Christ.
- **Question:** Is Christ the center of your life? Does Christ shape every aspect of your life? Is His glory the primary objective in your life? Who is Christ to you? Is He an additive or enhancer to your smoothie?

### **III. Now What? (What do I do with this?)**

- The point is this: Jesus is our righteousness. Our faith in Him unites us to Him therefore we are righteous before God. That means we are His children because of Christ and apart from anything that we do.
- So, two things:
  - First, we are not ok before God because of any one good deed that we do. Our salvation is not checks and balances.
  - Question: So where do good works come into the picture of life?
  - Second, God's unmerited grace in our salvation does not mean we respond in sinfulness
  - Because we are united to Christ through faith in Christ, we follow His ways in becoming more like Him. God's unmerited grace leads us to obedience. That is why we call good works fruit and not our way into the family of God. Those who are in the family of God will bear fruit.
  - Reminder, we are never speaking of perfection but rather a direction in life. Are you pursuing holiness and living a life of repentance and faith?